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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 002600

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

S/CPR for Eubanks, WHA/CEN for Trivelli and Lang, CA/VO
for Barry

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS TRIES AN END RUN TO NAME CONSUL IN
MOBILE; POST RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT SAY NO TO GOH NOMINEE

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY. Post was notified on August 1, that the GOH was attempting to name U.S. legal permanent resident, Elena Maria Diaz Marinakys de Szydel, as Consul General of Honduras in Mobile, Alabama. In addition to the fact that no Honduran Consulate currently exists in Mobile, Post has derogatory information concerning Mrs. Szydel's activities in Honduras during 2000 and 2001, when she was the dependent spouse the Area Engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). We believe that her conduct during the time her husband was assigned to this Embassy should make her unacceptable as a Consul General and member of the Diplomatic Corps. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) The proposed appointment came to Post's attention when a citizen and resident of Panama, Ana Isabel Pascual, applied for a visa on August 1, to work as a domestic employee for Elena Maria Diaz Marinakys in Mobile Alabama. The same day, the Consular Section received a call from Honduran Vice President, Alberto Diaz Lobo. Mr. Diaz Lobo said his daughter, Elena Maria Diaz Marinakys, had been appointed as the new Honduran Consul General in Mobile, Alabama and wanted to take the applicant to the U.S. as her domestic servant. When informed that the Department of State had not given its permission for Honduras to open a Consulate in Mobile, Mr. Diaz said that there had been a Consul in Mobile for years and his daughter was simply replacing the old Consul.

¶13. (U) Mrs. Marinakys later called the Consul General to ask for a special appointment for her maid because she was traveling with three small children and needed assistance. She further said that the applicant had been working for her in the U.S. for the last year. An examination of the applicant's passport indicated that she had been granted a B-1 visa in Tegucigalpa, on June 11, 2001 annotated to read, "Personal or domestic servant travel only with the family of Kevin and Elena SZYDEL". Her most recent trip to the U.S. had been from Feb. 19, 2002, until July 4, 2002.

¶14. (U) It became apparent that Elena Szydel and Elena Maria Diaz Marinakys were one and the same. On August 6, Ms. Marinakys again called the Consular Section to inquire about the visa. She admitted that she was a Legal Permanent Resident of the U.S., living in Mobile, she was married to U.S. citizen, and all three of their children were American citizens. She said the GOH was going through the process of getting Mobile approved for opening a Consulate and that she would then follow through to get a diplomatic visa for the applicant.

¶15. (SBU) A group of USACE contractors, from Mobile, Alabama, including the Szydel family, were expelled from Honduras by the Ambassador in 2001. As USACE contractors and direct employees of the Eterna Corporation, they committed gross financial irregularities, tax improprieties, customs violations, fraud, misrepresentation, malfeasance and misfeasance. An investigation of their activities was conducted by the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and the Inspector General of the U.S. Army. The entire group of Eterna contractors, and the Szydel family in particular, were found to be deeply involved in questionable activities during their stay in Honduras. Specifically, the Szydel family defrauded the USG by engaging in a rental reimbursement scheme. They lived in a house owned by Mrs. Szydel's mother. They lived there rent-free. However, they submitted vouchers and received reimbursements for rental expenses. They shared the reimbursements with Mrs. Szydel's sister, who represented herself as owner of the property. They committed fraud and abused their tax exempt status by importing a luxury automobile, a 2000 Lexus, for their personal use, while fraudulently describing it on shipping manifests as construction equipment. They then imported a second vehicle for personal use by taking it to Panama, removing Mrs. Szydel's name, retitling it in her husband's name and bringing it back into the country exempt from

taxation. They ordered handmade furniture from a manufacturing firm owned by her father and charged it to the USG as as part of their household expenses. All of these activities were discovered during the U.S. Army investigations. Mr. Szydel was reprimanded and punished by the USACE. Mrs. Szydel refused to cooperate with U.S. investigators and was not prosecuted under Honduran law.

¶6. (U) Based on the the specific activities of Mrs. Szydel, and her active involvement in defrauding the U.S. Government, we request the Protocol office to find Elena Maria Diaz Marinakys de Szydel unacceptable to serve as a Consul General of Honduras in Mobile. We also request that she be found unacceptable as a member of the Diplomatic Corps in the U.S.

PIERCE